

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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LOCAL PHOTOGRAPHER TRANSFORMS HOBBY INTO SMALL BUSINESS

WILLIAMSON, W.Va. - Selena Lipps, a resident of Williamson, cultivated a passion for photography early in a grade school 4-H program.

Her hobby has been a constant in her life but Lipps said she got the idea to convert it into a successful enterprise while watching an "Oprah" episode featuring a woman entrepreneur who started a sole proprietorship. There were few photography businesses in her region so Lipps perceived an untapped market for her services.

She did her homework, visiting banks and contacting local resources. When Lipps approached the Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College (SWVCTC), she learned about the campus' Small Business Development Center (SBDC).

"The SBDC has opportunities for someone who doesn't have many resources to open a business," Lipps said. "Ray Ellis (center manager for the SWVCTC SBDC) showed me the ropes. You don't meet people like that everyday who are willing to hold out a helping hand."

Ellis said he helped Lipps apply for the Small Business Administration Small Office Home Office (SOHO) Community Express loan. The application process requires no collateral, tax returns, business plans or personal or business financial statements.

Lipps purchased equipment with the loan proceeds. "It was just enough," Lipps said. "I could take a little and make it go a long way."



Selena Lipps used SBDC and SBA assistance to start her photography business. Photo Courtesy of J. Alex Wilson/WV Development Office

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Ellis also helped her write a business plan and cash forecast. “The SBDC gave me a good foundation to start my business,” Lipps said.

Lipps Photography opened in July 2005. She does portraits; covers weddings and special events; and frames and sells prints of varying subjects including nature, landscapes and architecture, as well as abstract photography.

“I started out without much to work with,” Lipps said. “It will be neat to look back someday and see where I started. I’ve attended Eastern Kentucky University taking classes with an emphasis on art. I hope to go back to school and major in business.”

“Selena is already well on her way to success,” Ellis said. “We at the SBDC look forward to working with more people like her – people who are driven to be successful.”

For more information contact Lipps Photography at (304) 235-3737. For more information on the SBDC, call (888) 982-7232 or visit www.sbdewv.org.

The SBDC is a division of the West Virginia Development Office and works with colleges, universities and other host institutions to provide free business consulting and technical assistance at 15 statewide locations. SBDCs are a program supported by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and extended to the public on a non-discriminatory basis. SBA cannot endorse any products, opinions or services of any external parties or activities. Arrangements for people with disabilities will be made if requested in advance.